



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities--National Center for Improving Teacher and Leader Professions to Better Serve Children with Disabilities

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Education (Department) is issuing a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2022 for the National Center for Improving Teacher and Leader Professions to Better Serve Children with Disabilities, Assistance Listing Number 84.325A. This notice relates to the approved information collection under OMB control number 1820-0028.

DATES:

Applications Available: **[INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: **[INSERT DATE 120 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

Pre-Application Webinar Information: No later than **[INSERT DATE 5 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL**

REGISTER], the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) will post details on pre-recorded informational webinars designed to provide technical assistance to interested applicants. Links to the webinars may be found at www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/osep/new-osep-grants.html.

ADDRESSES: For the addresses for obtaining and submitting an application, please refer to our Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* December 27, 2021 (86 FR 73264) and available at www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-27979. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on February 13, 2019, and, in part, describe the transition from the requirement to register in SAM.gov a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to the implementation of the Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). More information on the phase-out of DUNS numbers is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/fofo/docs/unique-entity-identifier-transition-fact-sheet.pdf>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: David Guardino, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, room 5135, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-5076. Telephone: (202) 245-6209. Email: David.Guardino@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay

Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purposes of the program are to (1) help address State-identified needs for personnel preparation in special education, early intervention, related services, and regular education to work with children, including infants and toddlers, and youth with disabilities; and (2) ensure that those personnel have the necessary skills and knowledge, derived from practices that have been determined through scientifically based research, to be successful in serving those children.

Priority: This competition includes one absolute priority. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(v), this priority is from allowable activities specified in the statute (see sections 662 and 681 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 20 U.S.C. 1462 and 1481).

Absolute Priority: For FY 2022 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is an absolute priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), we consider only applications that meet this priority.

This priority is:

The National Center for Improving Teacher and Leader Professions to Better Serve Children with Disabilities.

Background:

Critical shortages in the educator workforce are occurring nationwide. These shortages are more common in special education and related services than in general education and threaten the quality of education and services students with disabilities are receiving (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Mason-Williams et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the COVID-19 global pandemic has only exacerbated these shortages (e.g., higher rates of retirement and resignation) (Carver-Thomas, 2022). COVID-19 has also had an inequitable impact on student outcomes. While students across the country experienced unprecedented levels of interrupted instruction and increased strain on their social-emotional well-being, certain groups of students were significantly more impacted. Students of color, students with disabilities, and those in poverty suffered the greatest impact (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Adding to the complexity of the workforce shortages is that enrollment in preparation programs is down over 30 percent in the last 10 years (Espinoza et al., 2018). In addition to the shortage of special education professionals, there is a shortage of special education professionals of color. Research has shown the importance of diversifying the teaching workforce. All students benefit from a diverse educator workforce and students of color particularly benefit from a diverse educator

workforce. For example, a study by Eagalite et al. (2015) showed academic benefits when students of color and teachers of color share the classroom. Teachers of color and those with disabilities can serve as role models, mentors, and advocates for an increasingly diverse student population. Yet, research shows that while gains have been made in the recruitment of teachers of color, it is not keeping pace with an increasingly diverse student population (Carver-Thomas, 2018).

Roughly 90 percent of demand for teachers is due to teacher attrition, with nearly two-thirds of those leaving for reasons other than retirement, such as inadequate preparation and mentoring, low salaries, poor teaching conditions, and lack of administrative support (Espinoza et. Al., 2018). Whether they result from issues with recruitment, preparation, or retention, some States have lowered the requirements to obtain certification and licensure in teacher and leader¹ professions. From 2015 to 2020, 10 States removed requirements for candidates to pass a basic skills test for admittance into educator preparation programs altogether (Putman & Walsh, 2021).

An important component in the preparation and retention of teachers and leaders is the opportunity to

¹ For the purpose of this priority, the term “teacher and leader” includes general and special education teachers, related service providers, and educational administrators of systems that provide services to children and youth with disabilities and their families.

practice in structured clinical settings. Research has shown that teacher candidates perform better when the demographics at their school of employment are similar to the school where they did their student teaching, and those with 10 or more weeks of clinical practice were more likely to be teaching one year later versus those with fewer than 10 weeks of practice (Connely & Graham, 2009; Goldhaber et al., 2017). While many States have implemented policies to strengthen clinical practice, the overall impact on improved rigor is unchanged since 2015 (Putman & Walsh, 2021).

Hiring inadequately prepared and emergency certified teachers can have a negative impact on students' academic learning and social and emotional development, especially those with disabilities and those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds (Mason-Williams et al., 2020). Teachers need to be prepared to implement evidenced-based practices (EBPs),² high-leverage practices (HLPs),³ and culturally and linguistically responsive practices, to improve student outcomes, especially those

² For the purposes of this priority, "evidence-based practices" means practices that, at a minimum, demonstrate a rationale (as defined in 34 CFR 77.1), where a key project component included in the project's logic model is informed by research or evaluation findings that suggest the project component is likely to improve relevant outcomes.

³ For the purposes of this priority, "high-leverage practices" refers to a set of practices in special education that are essential to improving student learning and behavior and can be learned through coursework, deliberately practiced in clinical practice, and generalized in future field experiences. For more detailed information on high leverage practices, see *High-Leverage Practices in Special Education* at <https://highleveragepractices.org/>.

with disabilities and those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. According to the 2019 Nation's Report Card, roughly half of Black and Hispanic students in 4th grade were reading at a basic level. Worse, only 30 percent of students with disabilities in 4th grade were reading at a basic level that same year and only 12 percent were proficient or above. In addition to producing poor student outcomes, underprepared or poorly prepared teachers are less likely to stay in the field, and when teachers leave, it hurts student-teacher relationships, wastes efforts and resources spent on professional development (PD), and costs the national education system more than \$8 billion annually (Espinoza et al., 2018).

Clearly, the shortage of teachers, and especially special education teachers, is a multifaceted systemic challenge for States that requires contextually appropriate strategies and unique solutions that involve the State educational agencies (SEAs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and local educational agencies (LEAs) within States working in concert. SEAs, IHEs, and LEAs need technical assistance (TA) that will assist them to understand the changes they need to make to teacher and leader certification and licensure standards and program approval requirements to increase their ability to attract, prepare, and retain teachers and leaders, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. IHEs

need support to undergo continuous improvement, refining their programs to ensure teachers and leaders are well prepared to implement EBPs, HLPs, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Lastly, SEAs, IHEs, and LEAs need support to work together to improve and align personnel preparation systems to address shortages, diversify the workforce, and improve outcomes for all students, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities.

This absolute priority will advance the Secretary's priorities in the areas of addressing the impact of COVID-19 on students, educators, and faculty and supporting a diverse educator workforce and professional growth to strengthen student learning.

Priority:

The purpose of this priority is to fund a cooperative agreement to establish and operate a National Center for Improving Teacher and Leader Professions to Better Serve Children with Disabilities. The Center must achieve, at a minimum, the following expected outcomes:

(a) Increased IHE capacity to offer high-quality instruction for their teacher and leader candidates (which may include virtual and hybrid models if needed due to temporary school closures).

(b) Increased IHE capacity to offer high quality field experiences for their teacher and leader candidates (which may include virtual and hybrid models if in-person instruction is needed due to temporary school closures).

(c) Increased IHE capacity to embed EBPs, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices that are aligned to State certification and licensure standards and program approval requirements into teacher and leader preparation programs.

(d) Improved capacity of SEAs, in collaboration with IHEs and LEAs, to track and evaluate the impact that changes to certification and licensure standards and program approval requirements have on their ability to attract, prepare, and retain teachers and leaders, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities.

(e) Increased SEA, IHE, and LEA capacity to use multiple data sources to inform continuous improvement and alignment of their personnel preparation systems to attract, prepare, and retain teachers and leaders, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities.

(f) Increased capacity of SEAs, IHEs, and LEAs to scale up and sustain implementation of existing plans that align teacher and leader preparation systems to improve

outcomes for students with disabilities, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds.

In addition to these programmatic requirements, to be considered for funding under this priority, applicants must meet the application and administrative requirements in this priority, which are:

(a) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Significance," how the proposed project will--

(1) Ensure that IHE educator preparation programs are recruiting and preparing teachers and leaders, including those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities consistent with applicable law (including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act), to implement EBPs, HLPs, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices to support improved outcomes for students with disabilities. To meet this requirement the applicant must--

(i) Demonstrate knowledge of the need for IHE teacher and leader preparation programs to provide high quality instruction and opportunities to practice, best practices, maximize flexibility, and provide continuity of education (which may include virtual and hybrid models if needed due to temporary school closures);

(ii) Present applicable national and State data demonstrating the current needs of States to align

personnel preparation standards and program approval requirements and the extent that they include EBPs, HLPs, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices;

(iii) Present applicable national and State data on teacher and leader shortages and attrition rates, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, as well as the current needs of States, LEAs, and IHEs to address these issues;

(iv) Demonstrate knowledge of current educational issues and policy initiatives relating to program approval, lack of licensure portability across States, and supports to augment faculty knowledge and skills on integrating EBPs and culturally and linguistically competent instruction into the teacher and leader preparation curriculum;

(v) Present information about the current need for recruitment and preparation of teachers and leaders, especially those from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds consistent with applicable law (including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act), to address the complex roles they share in providing instruction in school-wide frameworks such as multi-tiered systems of support; and

(vi) Demonstrate knowledge of policies and practices that SEAs and IHEs can implement to improve and diversify teacher and leader professions consistent with applicable law (including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act), address shortages, and increase retention rates;

(2) Demonstrate knowledge of, and previous experience with, using effective approaches to disseminate knowledge, tools, and resources to SEAs, LEAs, IHEs, and TA providers; and

(3) Demonstrate knowledge of, and previous experience with, implementing TA strategies and delivering evidence-based PD to a variety of entities, including SEAs, LEAs, IHEs, other nonprofit organizations that provide teacher and leader preparation, and other TA providers.

(b) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of project services," how the proposed project will--

(1) Ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe how it will--

(i) Identify the needs of the intended recipients for TA and information; and

(ii) Ensure that services and products meet the needs of the intended recipients of the grant;

(2) Achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. To meet this requirement, the applicant must provide--

(i) Measurable intended project outcomes consistent with the intended outcomes specified in this notice; and

(ii) In Appendix A, the logic model⁴ by which the proposed project will achieve its intended outcomes that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;

(3) Use a conceptual framework (and provide a copy in Appendix A) to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, or theories, as well as the presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework;

Note: The following websites provide more information on logic models and conceptual frameworks:

www.osepideasthatwork.org/resources-grantees/program-areas/ta-ta/tad-project-logic-model-and-conceptual-framework;

<https://osepideasthatwork.org/evaluation?tab=eval-logic>;

and

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/central/pdf/REL_2021112.pdf.

(4) Be based on current research and make use of EBPs. To meet this requirement, the applicant must describe--

⁴ Logic model (34 CFR 77.1) (also referred to as a theory of action) means a framework that identifies key project components of the proposed project (i.e., the active "ingredients" that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the theoretical and operational relationships among the key project components and relevant outcomes.

(i) The current research on the effectiveness of systems change and capacity building within SEAs, LEAs, and IHEs, and EBPs that will inform the TA provided to SEAs, LEAs, and IHEs that undertake alignment and reform efforts;

(ii) The current research about adult learning principles and implementation science that will inform the proposed TA; and

(iii) How the proposed project will incorporate current research and practices in the development and delivery of its products and services;

(5) Develop products and provide services that are of high quality and sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) Its proposed approach to universal, general TA,⁵ which must identify the intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services, a description of the products and services that the Center proposes to make available, and the expected impact of those products and services under this approach;

⁵ "Universal, general TA" means TA and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with TA center staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by TA center staff. This category of TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the TA center's website by independent users. Brief communications by TA center staff with recipients, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general TA.

(ii) Its proposed approach to targeted, specialized TA,⁶ which must identify--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients, that will receive the products and services, a description of the products and services that the Center proposes to make available, and the expected impact of those products and services under this approach; and

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients to work with the project, assessing, at a minimum, their current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at the SEA, IHE, and LEA levels; and

(C) The process by which the project will provide ongoing targeted TA to SEAs and IHEs currently engaged in aligning and improving their teacher and leader preparation systems. This targeted TA should support SEA capacity to scale up and sustain ongoing reform efforts and the continued alignment of certification and licensure standards and program approval requirements. Targeted TA should also support the IHE's capacity to sustain teacher

⁶ "Targeted, specialized TA" means TA services based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA center staff. This category of TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the recipients. Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized TA.

and leader preparation reform efforts to embed strategies, EBPs, and evidence-based frameworks to better prepare teachers and leaders to serve students with disabilities; use data from a variety of sources, including data from teachers and leaders who successfully exit these programs to inform ongoing improvement efforts; and scale up reform efforts to additional IHEs or nonprofit organizations with teacher and leader preparation programs.

(D) The process the proposed project will use to collaborate with other relevant TA Centers and national organizations, as appropriate, to develop and implement targeted TA strategies in order to reduce duplication of effort and extend the reach of current TA providers;

(iii) Its proposed approach to intensive, sustained TA,⁷ which must identify--

(A) The intended recipients, including the type and number of recipients from a variety of settings and geographic distribution, that will receive the products and services designed under this approach;

(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of the SEAs and IHE preparation programs to work with the project, including their commitment to systems change,

⁷ "Intensive, sustained TA" means TA services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the TA center staff and the TA recipient. "TA services" are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

alignment of the TA to their needs, current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity in SEAs and IHEs;

(C) The process by which the project will provide intensive, sustained TA⁸ to SEAs and IHEs currently engaged in aligning and improving their teacher and leader preparation systems. This intensive TA should support SEA capacity to scale up and sustain ongoing reform efforts and the continued alignment of certification and licensure standards and program approval requirements. Intensive TA should also support the IHE's capacity to sustain teacher and leader preparation reform efforts to embed strategies, EBPs, HLPs, and evidence-based frameworks to better prepare teachers and leaders to serve students with disabilities; use data from a variety of sources, including from teachers and leaders who successfully exit these programs to inform ongoing improvement efforts; and scale up reform efforts to additional IHEs or nonprofit organizations with teacher and leader preparation programs.

(6) Develop products and implement services that maximize efficiency. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

⁸For information on the activities of the current cooperative agreement, applicants should refer to <https://osepideasthatwork.org/find-center-or-grant/find-a-center/collaboration-effective-educator-development-accountability-and>

(i) How the proposed project will use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes;

(ii) With whom the proposed project will collaborate and the intended outcomes of this collaboration. The description should include how the proposed project will provide PD to other TA Centers and relevant OSEP-funded investments (e.g., 84.323A, 84.325C, 84.325D, and 84.325K grantees) on available tools and resources to leverage and extend the reach of its TA; and

(iii) How the proposed project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes (e.g., existing TA resources from other OSEP-funded TA Centers); and

(7) Develop a dissemination plan that describes how the applicant will systematically distribute information, products, and services to varied intended audiences, using a variety of dissemination strategies (e.g., social media), to promote awareness and use of the Center's products and services.

(c) In the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the project evaluation," include an evaluation plan for the project developed in consultation with and implemented by a third-party evaluator.⁹ The evaluation plan must--

⁹ A "third-party" evaluator is an independent and impartial program evaluator who is contracted by the grantee to conduct an objective

(1) Articulate formative and summative evaluation questions, including important process and outcome evaluation questions. These questions should be related to the project's proposed logic model required in paragraph

(b) (2) (ii) of this notice;

(2) Describe how progress in and fidelity of implementation, as well as project outcomes, will be measured to answer the evaluation questions. Specify the measures and associated instruments or sources for data appropriate to the evaluation questions. Include information regarding reliability and validity of measures where appropriate;

(3) Describe strategies for analyzing data and how data collected as part of this plan will be used to inform and improve service delivery over the course of the project and to refine the proposed logic model and evaluation plan, including subsequent data collection;

(4) Provide a timeline for conducting the evaluation and include staff assignments for completing the plan. The timeline must indicate that the data will be available annually for the annual performance report (APR) and at the end of Year 2 for the review process described under the heading, Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project;

evaluation of the project. This evaluator must not have participated in the development or implementation of any project activities, except for the evaluation activities, nor have any financial interest in the outcome of the evaluation.

(5) Dedicate sufficient funds in each budget year to cover the costs of developing or refining the evaluation plan in consultation with a third-party evaluator, as well as the costs associated with the implementation of the evaluation plan by the third-party evaluator.

(d) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel," how--

(1) The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate, consistent with applicable law (including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act);

(2) The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and

(4) The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

(e) Demonstrate, in the narrative section of the application under "Quality of the management plan," how--

(1) The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and

within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--

(i) Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and

(ii) Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

(2) The proposed key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;

(3) The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and

(4) The proposed project will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators including those who are racially and ethnically diverse, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

(f) Address the following application requirements. The applicant must--

(1) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;

(2) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(i) A one and one-half day kick-off meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, or virtually, with the OSEP project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

Note: Within 30 days of receipt of the award, a post-award teleconference must be held between the OSEP project officer and the grantee's project director or other authorized representative;

(ii) A two and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, or virtually, during each year of the project period;

(iii) Two annual two-day trips to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP; and

(iv) A virtual one-day intensive 3+2 review meeting during the second year of the project period;

(3) Include, in the budget, a line item for an annual set-aside of 5 percent of the grant amount to support emerging needs that are consistent with the proposed project's intended outcomes, as those needs are identified in consultation with, and approved by, the OSEP project officer. With approval from the OSEP project officer, the project must reallocate any remaining funds from this annual set-aside no later than the end of the third quarter of each budget period;

(4) Maintain a high-quality website, with an easy-to-navigate design, that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility;

(5) Ensure that annual project progress toward meeting project goals is posted on the project website; and

(6) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to a new award at the end of this award period, as appropriate.

Fourth and Fifth Years of the Project:

In deciding whether to continue funding the project for the fourth and fifth years, the Secretary will consider the requirements of 34 CFR 75.253(a), including--

(a) The recommendations of a 3+2 review team consisting of experts with knowledge and experience in providing TA to improve personnel preparation programs. This review will be conducted during a one-day intensive meeting that will be held during the last half of the second year of the project period;

(b) The timeliness with which, and how well, the requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project; and

(c) The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the project's products and services and the extent to which the project's products and services are aligned with the

project's objectives and likely to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

Under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary may reduce continuation awards or discontinue awards in any year of the project period for excessive carryover balances or a failure to make substantial progress. The Department intends to closely monitor unobligated balances and substantial progress under this program and may reduce or discontinue funding accordingly.

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<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/20210608-impacts-of-covid19.pdf>.

Waiver of Proposed Rulemaking: Under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) the Department generally offers interested parties the opportunity to comment on proposed priorities. Section 681(d) of IDEA, however, makes the public comment requirements of the APA inapplicable to the priority in this notice.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1462 and 1481.

Note: Projects will be awarded and must be operated in a manner consistent with the nondiscrimination requirements contained in Federal civil rights laws.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as

adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 79 apply to all applicants except federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to IHEs only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Cooperative agreement.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$90,200,000 for the Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities program for FY 2022, of which we intend to use an estimated \$3,500,000 for this competition. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2023 from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Maximum Award: We will not make an award exceeding \$3,500,000 for a single budget period of 12 months.

Estimated Number of Awards: 1.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 60 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: SEAs; LEAs, including public charter schools that are considered LEAs under State law; IHEs; other public agencies; private nonprofit organizations; freely associated States and outlying areas; Indian Tribes or Tribal organizations; and for-profit organizations.

2. a. Cost Sharing or Matching: This competition does not require cost sharing or matching.

b. Indirect Cost Rate Information: This program uses an unrestricted indirect cost rate. For more information regarding indirect costs, or to obtain a negotiated indirect cost rate, please see www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocfo/intro.html.

Administrative Cost Limitation: This program does not include any program-specific limitation on administrative expenses. All administrative expenses must be reasonable and necessary and conform to Cost Principles described in 2 CFR part 200 subpart E of the Uniform Guidance.

3. Subgrantees: A grantee under this competition may not award subgrants to entities to directly carry out project activities described in its application. Under 34 CFR 75.708(e), a grantee may contract for supplies, equipment, and other services in accordance with 2 CFR part 200.

4. Other General Requirements:

a. Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities (see section 606 of IDEA).

b. Applicants for, and recipients of, funding must, with respect to the aspects of their proposed project relating to the absolute priority, involve individuals with disabilities, or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26, in planning, implementing, and evaluating the project (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Application Submission Instructions: Applicants are required to follow the Common Instructions for Applicants to Department of Education Discretionary Grant Programs, published in the *Federal Register* on December 27, 2021 (86 FR 73264) and available at www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-27979, which contain requirements and information on how to submit an application. Please note that these Common Instructions supersede the version published on February 13, 2019, and, in part, describe the transition from the requirement to register in SAM.gov a DUNS number to the implementation of the UEI. More information on the phase-out of DUNS numbers is available at

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ofo/docs/unique-entity-identifier-transition-fact-sheet.pdf>.

2. Intergovernmental Review: This competition is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this competition.

3. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

4. Recommended Page Limit: The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. We recommend that you (1) limit the application narrative to no more than 70 pages and (2) use the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.
- Double-space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, reference citations, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.
- Use a font that is 12 point or larger.
- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

The recommended page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the abstract (follow the guidance provided in the application package for completing the abstract), the table of contents, the list of priority requirements, the resumes, the reference list, the letters of support, or the appendices. However, the recommended page limit does apply to all of the application narrative, including all text in charts, tables, figures, graphs, and screen shots.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed below:

(a) Significance (10 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the significance of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the significance of the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

(ii) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.

(b) Quality of project services (35 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.

(ii) The extent to which there is a conceptual framework underlying the proposed research or demonstration activities and the quality of that framework.

(iii) The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project reflect up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

(iv) The extent to which the training or professional development services to be provided by the proposed project are of sufficient quality, intensity, and duration to lead to improvements in practice among the recipients of those services.

(v) The extent to which the TA services to be provided by the proposed project involve the use of efficient strategies, including the use of technology, as appropriate, and the leveraging of non-project resources.

(c) Quality of the project evaluation (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the evaluation to be conducted of the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.

(iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.

(d) Adequacy of resources and quality of project personnel (15 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the adequacy of resources for the proposed project and the quality of the personnel who will carry out the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are

members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(3) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

(ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.

(iii) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.

(iv) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.

(v) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.

(e) Quality of the management plan (20 points).

(1) The Secretary considers the quality of the management plan for the proposed project.

(2) In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within

budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.

(ii) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.

(iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.

(iv) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant conditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances, including those

applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

3. Additional Review and Selection Process Factors:

In the past, the Department has had difficulty finding peer reviewers for certain competitions because so many individuals who are eligible to serve as peer reviewers have conflicts of interest. The standing panel requirements under section 682(b) of IDEA also have placed additional constraints on the availability of reviewers. Therefore, the Department has determined that for some discretionary grant competitions, applications may be separated into two or more groups and ranked and selected for funding within specific groups. This procedure will make it easier for the Department to find peer reviewers by ensuring that greater numbers of individuals who are eligible to serve as reviewers for any particular group of applicants will not have conflicts of interest. It also will increase the quality, independence, and fairness of the review process, while permitting panel members to review applications under discretionary grant competitions for which they also have submitted applications.

4. Risk Assessment and Specific Conditions:

Consistent with 2 CFR 200.206, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the

risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 200.208, the Secretary may impose specific conditions, and under 2 CFR 3474.10, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

5. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$250,000), under 2 CFR 200.206(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through the System for Award Management. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement

contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually. Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

6. In General: In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department will review and consider applications for funding pursuant to this notice inviting applications in accordance with--

(a) Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR 200.205);

(b) Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115-232) (2 CFR 200.216);

(c) Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR 200.322); and

(d) Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law if an award no longer

effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR 200.340).

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Open Licensing Requirements: Unless an exception applies, if you are awarded a grant under this competition, you will be required to openly license to the public grant deliverables created in whole, or in part, with Department grant funds. When the deliverable consists of

modifications to pre-existing works, the license extends only to those modifications that can be separately identified and only to the extent that open licensing is permitted under the terms of any licenses or other legal restrictions on the use of pre-existing works. Additionally, a grantee that is awarded competitive grant funds must have a plan to disseminate these public grant deliverables. This dissemination plan can be developed and submitted after your application has been reviewed and selected for funding. For additional information on the open licensing requirements please refer to 2 CFR 3474.20.

4. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competition. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR

75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

5. Performance Measures: For the purposes of Department reporting under 34 CFR 75.110, we have established a set of performance measures, including long-term measures, that are designed to yield information on various aspects of the effectiveness and quality of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination to Improve Services and Results for Children With Disabilities program. These measures are:

- Program Performance Measure #1: The percentage of Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of experts qualified to review the substantive content of the products and services.

- Program Performance Measure #2: The percentage of Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be of high relevance to educational and early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure #3: The percentage of all Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination products and services deemed by an independent review panel of qualified experts to be useful in improving educational or early intervention policy or practice.

- Program Performance Measure #4: The cost efficiency of the Technical Assistance and Dissemination Program includes the percentage of milestones achieved in the current annual performance report period and the percentage of funds spent during the current fiscal year.

- Long-term Program Performance Measure: The percentage of States receiving Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination services regarding scientifically or evidence-based practices for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities that successfully promote the implementation of those practices in school districts and service agencies.

The measures apply to projects funded under this competition, and grantees are required to submit data on these measures as directed by OSEP.

Grantees will be required to report information on their project's performance in annual and final performance reports to the Department (34 CFR 75.590).

The Department will also closely monitor the extent to which the products and services provided by the Center meet needs identified by stakeholders and may require the Center to report on such alignment in their annual and final performance reports.

6. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial

progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, whether the grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation award, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Other Information

Accessible Format: On request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT, individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format. The Department will provide the requestor with an accessible format that may include Rich Text Format (RTF) or text format (txt), a thumb drive, an MP3 file, braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc, or other accessible format.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the *Federal*

Register. You may access the official edition of the *Federal Register* and the Code of Federal Regulations at www.govinfo.gov. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the *Federal Register*, in text or Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the *Federal Register* by using the article search feature at www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Katherine Neas,

Deputy Assistant Secretary,

Delegated the authority to perform the functions and duties of the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

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